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tion of thought—its self-consistence—which issues in the transcendental discovery of the Unity of the One Thinker, and of the Thinker with his Thought, seems to me to indicate with an irresistible confidence that there is an awareness in which the human life finds its fulfilment and meaning; while the boundaries set to our conscious experience as limited and particular, prohibit the entrance of the fulness of the nature of God into the passing show of His temporal life in us.

## LEIBNITZ'S CRITIQUE OF LOCKE.<sup>1</sup>

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY ALFRED G. LANGLEY.

NEW ESSAYS ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

BOOK I.—INNATE IDEAS.

CHAPTER II.

### *No Innate Practical Principles.*

§ 1. *Philaletes*. Ethics is a demonstrative science, and yet it has no innate principles. And, indeed, it would be very difficult to produce a rule of ethics of a nature to be settled by an assent as general and as prompt as this maxim: Whatever is, is.

*Theophilus*. It is absolutely impossible that there be truths of reason as evident as those which are identical or immediate. And, although you can truly say that ethics has principles which are not demonstrable, and that one of the first and most practical is, that you ought to pursue joy and avoid sorrow, it is needful to add that this is not a truth which is known purely by reason, since it is based upon internal experience, or upon confused knowledge, for you do not feel what joy or sadness is.

*Ph*. It is only through processes of reasoning, through language, and through some mental application, that you can be assured of practical truths.

*Th*. Though that were so, they would not be less innate. However, the maxim I just adduced appears of another nature; it is

<sup>1</sup> Continued from "The Journal of Speculative Philosophy," vol. xix, No. 3, July, 1885.

not known by the reason, but, so to speak, by an instinct. It is an innate principle, but it does not form a part of the natural light, for it is not known luminously. However this principle is stated, you can draw from it scientific consequences, and I commend most heartily what you just said of ethics as a demonstrative science. Let us note also that it teaches truths so evident that thieves, pirates, and bandits are forced to observe them among themselves.

§ 2. *Ph.* But bandits keep the rules of justice among themselves without considering them as innate principles.

*Th.* What matters it? Does the world concern itself about questions of theory?

*Ph.* They observe the maxims of justice only as convenient rules, the practice of which is absolutely necessary to the conservation of their society.

*Th.* <sup>1</sup>[Very well. You could say nothing better in general in respect to all men. And it is thus that these laws are written in the soul, namely, as the consequences of our preservation and of our true welfare. Do you imagine that we suppose that truths are in the understanding as independent the one of the other as the edicts of the prætor were on his placard or white tablet? I put aside here the instinct which prompts man to love man, of which

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<sup>1</sup> Note on Gerhardt's text, which is the basis of the present translation.—Quite frequently in the text of Gerhardt's edition there is an "Et" which Erdmann omits. Compare the note as to Leibnitz's French style at the foot of page 278, "Jour. Spec. Phil.," July, 1885, translated from Gerhardt's introduction. The textual variations in the editions of Erdmann and Gerhardt are for the most part very slight, scarcely ever affecting the sense to an extent worth taking account of, and are due, in my judgment, chiefly to Leibnitz's imperfect knowledge of French which later editors have sought to correct or supplement. Occasionally these variations seem to be due (as in the preface) to abbreviation by excision of superfluous phrases or passages which contain and add little or nothing of value to the discussion.

The translation, however, continues upon the basis of Gerhardt's text as the most reliable, and aims to preserve its distinguishing features with the purpose of bringing so far as possible in an English dress, Leibnitz's original, before the English reader. To this end I have introduced into the translation the [ ] precisely as they stand in the French text of Gerhardt. His explanation of them is given in the note he appends to his statement that his text "has been newly compared with the original, so far as it is still extant" (see p. 279, "Jour. Spec. Phil., July, 1885). The text of the translation thus conforms to and represents the original as perfectly as possible. There seems to be, however, little regularity or consistency in the employment of these [ ], so far, at least, as I can discover upon comparison with Locke's treatise.—TRANSLATOR.

I shall presently speak, for now I wish to speak only of truths in so far as they are known by the reason. I admit, also, that certain rules of justice could not be demonstrated, in all their extent and perfection, without supposing the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, and these, where the instinct of humanity does not impel us, are written in the soul only as other derivative truths.] However, those who base justice only upon the necessities of this life and upon the need they have of it, rather than upon the pleasure they ought to derive from it, which is the greatest when God is its ground, are liable to resemble a little the society of bandits.

"Sit spes fallendi, miscébunt sacra profanis."<sup>1</sup>

§ 3. *Ph.* I agree with you that Nature has put in all men the desire for happiness and a strong aversion to misery. These are the truly innate practical principles, and principles which, according to the purpose of every practical principle, have a continual influence upon all our actions. But they are inclinations of the soul toward the good, and not impressions<sup>2</sup> of some truth which is written in our understanding.

*Th.* [I am delighted, sir, to see that you admit in effect innate truths, as I shall presently say. This principle agrees sufficiently with that which I just indicated, which prompts us to seek joy and shun sorrow. For felicity is only a lasting joy. However, our inclination does not tend to felicity proper, but to joy—that is to say, to the present; it is the reason which prompts to future and enduring welfare. Now, the inclination, expressed by the understanding, passes into a precept or practical truth; and if the inclination is innate, the truth is innate also, there being nothing in the soul which may not be expressed in the understanding, but not always by a consideration actually distinct, as I have sufficiently shown. The instincts also are not always practical; there are some which contain theoretical truths, and such are the internal principles of the sciences and of reasoning, if, without recognizing the reason in them, we employ them by a natural instinct. And

<sup>1</sup> Compare Hor. i, Epist., 16, 54. Horace has "*miscēbis*."—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Erdmann's and Jacques's text has "*des imperfections de quelque vérité*." Gerhardt reads, "*des impressions de quelque vérité*." Locke has "*impressions of truth*." Book I, chap. 3, § 3. Vol. I, p. 158, line 5, Bohn's edition.

in this sense you cannot dispense with the recognition of innate principles, even though you might be willing to deny that derivative truths are innate. But this would be a question of name merely after the explanation I have given of what I call innate. And if any one desires to give this appellation only to the truths which are received at first by instinct, I shall not contest the point with him.]

*Ph.* That is well. But if there were in our soul certain characters imprinted there by Nature, like so many principles of knowledge, we could only perceive them acting in us, as we feel the influence of the two principles which are constantly active in us—namely, the desire of happiness and the fear of misery.

*Th.* [There are principles of knowledge which influence us as constantly in our reasoning processes as these practical principles influence us in our volitions; for example, everybody employs the rules of deduction by a natural Logic without being aware of it.

§ 4. *Ph.* The rules of Morality need to be proved; they are then not innate, like that rule which is the source of the virtues which society regards as such: Do to another only what you would have him do to yourself.

*Th.* You always make me the objection which I have already refuted. I agree with you that there are moral rules which are not innate principles; but that does not prevent them from being innate truths, for a derivative truth will be innate, supposing that we can draw it from our mind. But there are innate truths, which we find in us in two ways—by insight and by instinct. Those which I have just indicated, show by our ideas what natural insight accomplishes. But there are conclusions of natural insight which are principles in relation to instinct. It is thus that we are prompted to acts of humanity, by instinct because it pleases us, and by reason because it is just. There are then in us truths of instinct, which are innate principles, which we feel and approve, although we have not the proof of them which we obtain, however, when we give a reason for this instinct. It is thus that we make use of the laws of deduction conformably to a confused knowledge, and as by instinct, but logicians show the reason of them, as mathematicians also give a reason for what they do without thinking in walking and leaping. As for the rule which states that we ought to do to others only what we would have them do

to us, it needs not only proof, but, further, it needs to be proclaimed. One would wish too much for one's self if one could have one's own way; shall we say then that one also owes too much to others?¹ You will tell me that the rule requires only a just will. But thus this rule, very far from being adequate to serve as a measure, would itself need one. The true sense of the rule is, that the place of another is the true point of view for equitable judgment when you attempt it.]

§ 9. *Ph.* Bad acts are often committed without any remorse of conscience; for example, when cities are carried by storm, the soldiers commit, without scruple, the worst acts; some civilized nations have exposed their children, some Caribbees castrate theirs in order to fatten and eat them. Garcilasso de la Vega reports that certain peoples of Peru took prisoners in order to make concubines of them, and supported the children up to the age of thirteen, after which they ate them, and treated in the same manner the mothers so soon as they no longer bore children. In the voyage of Baumgarten it is related that there was a Santon² in Egypt who passed for a holy man, *eo quod non foeminarum unquam esset ac puerorum, sed tantum asellarum concubitor atque mularum.*

*Th.* Moral science (over and above the instincts like that which makes us seek joy and shun sadness) is not otherwise innate than is arithmetic, for it depends likewise upon demonstrations which internal insight furnishes. And as the demonstrations do not at once leap into sight, it is no great wonder, if men do not perceive always and at once all that they possess in themselves, and do not read quite readily the characters of the natural law, which God, according to St. Paul, has written in their minds. However, as morality is more important than arithmetic, God has given to man instincts which prompt at once and without reasoning to some portion of that which reason ordains. Just as we walk in obedience to the laws of mechanics without thinking of these laws, and as we eat, not only because eating is necessary for us, but further and much more because it gives us pleasure. But these instincts do not prompt to action in an invincible way; the passions may resist them, prejudices may obscure them, and contrary customs alter

¹ This sentence is found in the texts of Erdmann and Gerhardt; it is wanting in that of Jacques.

² Mahometan monk.

them. Nevertheless, you agree most frequently with these instincts of conscience, and you follow them also when stronger impressions do not overcome them. The greatest and most healthy part of the human race bears them witness. The Orientals and the Greeks or Romans, the Bible and the Koran agree in respect to them; the Mahometan police are wont to punish the thing Baumgarten tells of, and it would be needful to be as brutalized as the American savage in order to approve their customs, full of a cruelty, which surpasses even that of the beasts. However, these same savages perceive clearly what justice is on other occasions;<sup>1</sup> and although there is no bad practice, perhaps, which may not be authorized in some respects and upon some occasions, there are few of them, however, which are not condemned very frequently and by the larger part of mankind. That which has not been attained without reason, and was not attained by reasoning alone, should be referred in part to the natural instincts. Custom, tradition, discipline, are thus intermingled, but it is due to instinct (*le naturel*) that custom is turned more generally to the good side of these duties. In the same way,<sup>2</sup> the tradition of God's existence is due to instinct (*le naturel*). Now Nature gives to man and also to most of the animals affectionate and tender feeling for those of their species. The tiger even *parcit cognatis maculis*; whence comes this *bon mot* of a Roman jurisconsult, *Quia inter omnes homines natura cognationem constituit, unde hominem homini insidiari nefas esse*. Spiders form almost the only exception, and these eat one another to this extent that the female devours the male after having enjoyed him. Besides this general instinct of society, which may be called philanthropy in man,

<sup>1</sup> Compare J. G. Schurman's "The Ethical Import of Darwinism," pp. 256-260. He states that "some gropings amid the general darkness incline me, at least tentatively, to the belief that, apart from the domestic virtues, there is no such great difference between the morals of Christians and the morals of savages" (p. 256). This statement is modified further on pp. 258-259, and finally takes the following form: "The fighting men, actual and potential, in every uncivilized community recognize the same rights, obligations, and duties toward one another as constitute the essence of civilized morality. You never find a man without a moral nature, a nature essentially like our own; but the objects he includes within the scope of its outgoings vary" (p. 259). For the real significance of such facts see "Principles and Practice of Morality," by Pres. E. G. Robinson, of Brown University (p. 43).—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Gerhardt's text reads, "*C'est comme le naturel*," etc.

there are some more particular forms of it, as the affection between the male and the female, the love which father and mother bear toward the children, which the Greeks call *στοργήν*, and other similar inclinations which make this natural law, or this image of law rather, which, according to the Roman jurisconsults, Nature has taught to animals. But in man in particular there is found a certain regard for dignity, for propriety, which leads him to conceal (the) things, which lower us, to be sparing of shame, to have repugnance for incests, to bury dead bodies, not to eat men at all nor living animals. One is led further to be careful of his reputation, even beyond need, and of life; to be subject to remorse of conscience, and to feel these *laniatus et ictus*, these tortures and torments of which Tacitus, following Plato, speaks; besides the fear of a future and of a supreme power which comes, moreover, naturally enough. There is reality in all that; but at bottom these natural impressions, whatever they may be, are only aids to the reason and indices of the plan of Nature. Custom, education, tradition, reason, contribute much, but human nature ceases not to participate therein. It is true that without the reason these aids would not suffice to give a complete certitude to morals. Finally, will you deny that man is naturally led, for example, to withdraw from vile things, under a pretext that races are found who like to speak only of filth, that there are some, indeed, whose mode of life obliges them to handle excrements, and that there are people of Boutan, where those of the king pass as an aromatic. I think that you are of my opinion at bottom in regard to these natural instincts which tend toward what is right and decent; although you will say, perhaps, as you have said with regard to the instinct which prompts to joy and felicity, that these impressions are not innate truths. But I have already replied that every opinion is the perception of a truth, and that the natural opinion is the (perception) of an innate truth, but very often confused, as are the experiences of the external senses; thus you can distinguish the innate truths from the natural insight (which contains only the distinctly knowable), as the genus should be distinguished from its species, since the innate truths comprehend both the instincts and the natural insight.]

§ 11. *Ph.* A person who knew the natural limits of justice and injustice, and (who) would not cease confusing them with each



other, could only be regarded as the declared enemy of the repose and the welfare of the society of which he is a member. But men confuse them every moment, consequently they do not know them.

*Th.* [That is taking things a little too theoretically. It happens every day that men act contrary to their knowledge in concealing these (limits) from themselves when they turn the mind elsewhere, in order to follow their passions; otherwise, we would not see people eating and drinking what they know must cause them sickness and even death. They would not neglect their business; they would not do what entire nations have done in certain respects. The future and reason rarely make so strong an impression as the present and the senses. That Italian knew this well, who, before being put to torture, proposed to have the gallows continually in sight during the torments in order to resist them, and they heard him say sometimes, "*Io ti vedo*," which he explained afterward when he had escaped. Unless you firmly resolve to look upon the true good and the true evil with the purpose of following or shunning them, you find yourself carried away, and it happens, with regard to the most important needs of this life, as it happens with regard to paradise and hell in the case of those, indeed, who believe in them the most:

Cantantur haec, laudantur haec,  
Dicuntur, audiuntur.  
Scribuntur haec, leguntur haec,  
Et lecta negliguntur.]

*Ph.* Every principle which you suppose innate can only be known by each one as just and advantageous.

*Th.* [You always return to this supposition, which I have refuted so many times, that every innate truth is known always and by all.]

§ 12. *Ph.* But a public permission to violate the law proves that this law is not innate; for example, the law requiring love and preservation of children was violated among the ancients when they permitted their exposure.

*Th.* [This violation supposed, it follows only that you have not well read these characters of Nature written in our souls, but sometimes obscure enough by reason of our excesses, not to mention that, in order to have a perfectly clear perception of the necessity

of duties, men must see the demonstration of them—a condition that is rarely fulfilled. If geometry were as much opposed to our passions and present interests as is ethics, we should contest it and violate it but little less, notwithstanding all the demonstrations of Euclid and of Archimedes, which you would call dreams and believe full of paralogisms; and Joseph Scaliger, Hobbes, and others, who have written against Euclid and Archimedes, would not find themselves in such a small company as at present. It was only the passion for glory, which these authors believed they found in the quadrature of the circle and other difficult problems, which could dazzle to such a point persons of so great merit. And if others had the same interest, they would make use of it in much the same manner.]

*Ph.* Every duty carries the idea of law, and a law would not be known or supposed without a legislator who has prescribed it, or without reward and without punishment.

*Th.* [There can be natural rewards and penalties without a legislator; intemperance, for example, is punished by disease. However, as this injures no one at first, I admit that there are few precepts to which you would be indispensably bound if there were not a God who leaves no crime without chastisement, no good act without reward.]

*Ph.* It is necessary then that the ideas of a God and of a life to come be also innate.

*Th.* [I am agreed in the sense in which I have explained myself.]

*Ph.* But these ideas are so far from being written by Nature in the mind of all men, that they do not appear even very clear and very distinct in the mind of several students, who also profess to examine things with some accuracy; so far are they from being known by every human being.

*Th.* You return again to the same proposition, which maintains that what is not known is not innate, which I have, however, refuted so many times. What is innate is not at first known clearly and distinctly as such; often much attention and method is necessary in order to their perception, the student-class do not always adduce them, still less every human being.

§ 13. *Ph.* But if men can be ignorant of or call in question that which is innate, it is in vain for you to speak to us of innate prin-

ciples, and to claim to show us their necessity; very far from being able to serve as our instructors in the truth and certitude of things, as is maintained, we shall find ourselves in the same state of uncertainty in regard to these principles, as if they were not in us.

*Th.* You cannot call in question all the innate principles. You were agreed in regard to identical propositions or the principle of contradiction, admitting that there are incontestable principles, although you would not then recognize them as innate; but it does not at all follow that everything which is innate and necessarily connected with these innate principles, is also at first indubitably evident.

*Ph.* No one that I know of has yet undertaken to give us an exact catalogue of these principles.

*Th.* But has any one hitherto given us a full and exact catalogue of the axioms of geometry?

§ 15. *Ph.* My Lord Herbert has been pleased to point out some of these principles, which are: 1. There is a supreme God. 2. He ought to be served. 3. Virtue united with piety is the best worship. 4. Repentance for sin is necessary. 5. There are penalties and rewards after this life. I agree that those are evident truths and of such a nature that when well explained a reasonable person can scarcely avoid giving them his consent. But our friends say that they are very far from being so many innate impressions, and if these five propositions are common notions written in our souls by the finger of God, there are many others which you ought also to put into this class.

*Th.* I agree with you, sir, for I take all the necessary truths as innate, and I connect with them also the instincts. But, I agree with you, that these five propositions are not innate principles; for I hold that they can and ought to be proved.

§ 18. *Ph.* In the third proposition, that virtue is the worship most agreeable to God, it is not clear what is meant by virtue. If you understand it in the sense most commonly given to the term, I mean that which passes as praiseworthy according to the different opinions which prevail in different countries, this proposition is so far from being evident that it is not even true. If you call virtue the acts which are conformed to the will of God, this will be almost *idem per idem*, and the proposition will teach us noth-

ing of importance; for it would mean only that God is pleased with that which is conformed to his will. It is the same with the notion of sin in the fourth proposition.

*Th.* I do not remember to have remarked that virtue is commonly taken as something which depends upon opinion; at least, the Philosophers do not make it that. It is true that the name of virtue depends upon the opinion of those who give it to different habits or actions, according as they deem them good or bad and use their reason; but all are sufficiently agreed as to the notion of virtue in general, although they differ in its application. According to Aristotle and several others, virtue is a habit of restraining the passions by the reason, and still more, simply a habit of acting according to reason. And that cannot fail to be agreeable to him who is the supreme and final reason of things, to whom nothing is indifferent, and the acts of rational creatures less than all others.

§ 20. *Ph.* You are wont to say that the custom, the education, and the general opinions of those with whom you converse may obscure these principles of morality which you suppose innate. But if this reply is a good one, it annihilates the proof which you pretend to draw from universal consent. The reasoning of many men reduces to this: The principles which men of right reason admit are innate: We and those of our mind are men of right reason; consequently our principles are innate. A pleasant method of reasoning, which goes straight on to infallibility!

*Th.* For myself, I make use of universal consent, not as a principal proof, but as a confirmatory one; for innate truths taken as the natural insight of reason bear their marks with them as does geometry, for they are wrapped up in the immediate principles which you yourselves admit as incontestable. But I grant that it is more difficult to distinguish the instincts and some other natural habits from custom, although it may very often be possible so to do. For the rest, it appears to me that people who have cultivated their minds have some ground for attributing the use of right reason to themselves rather than to the barbarians, since in subduing them almost as easily as they do animals they show sufficiently their superiority. But if they cannot always succeed in this, it is because just like the animals they conceal themselves in the thick forests, where it is difficult to hunt them down and the

game is not worth the candle. It is doubtless an advantage to have cultivated the mind, and if we may speak for barbarism as against culture, we shall also have the right to attack reason in favor of the animals, and to take seriously the witty sallies of M. Des Preaux, in one of his satires, where, in order to contest with man his prerogative over the animals, he asks, whether,

The bear is afraid of the passer-by or the passer-by of the bear—  
And if by decree of the shepherds of Libya  
The lions would vacate the parks of Numidia, etc.

However, we must admit that there are some points in which the barbarians surpass us, especially as regards vigor of body; and as regards the soul even we may say that in certain respects their practical morality is better than ours, because they have not the avarice of hoarding nor the ambition of ruling. And one may even add that the conversation of Christians has made them worse in many respects.<sup>1</sup> They have taught them drunkenness (when carrying them the water of life), swearing, blasphemy, and other vices, which were little known to them. There is with us more of good and of evil than with them: a bad European is worse than a savage—he refines upon evil. However, nothing should prevent men from uniting the advantages which Nature gives to these peoples with those which reason gives us.

*Ph.* But what reply do you make, sir, to this dilemma of one of my friends? I would be pleased, he says, to have the advocates of innate ideas tell me whether these principles can or cannot be effaced by education and custom. If they cannot be effaced we ought to find them in all men, and they should clearly appear in the mind of each particular man. If they can be altered by extraneous ideas, they ought to appear more distinctly and with more lustre the nearer they are to their source. I mean in children or illiterate people, upon whom extraneous opinions have made less impression. Let them take which side they please, they will clearly see, he says, that it is contradicted by indubitable facts and by continual experience.

*Th.* I am astonished that your clever friend has confounded obscurity with effacement, as some in your party confound non-

<sup>1</sup> Gerhardt has *respects: they (chooses: on leur a appris)*. Compare J. G. Schurman's "The Ethical Import of Darwinism," pp. 256-260 as above.—Tr.

being with non-appearance. Innate ideas and truths would not be effaced, but they are obscured in all men (as they are now) by their inclination toward the needs of the body, and oftener still by the occurrence of bad customs. These characteristics of the internal light would always be shining in the understanding and would give fervor to the will, if the confused perceptions of sense did not engross our attention. It is the struggle of which Holy Scripture no less than ancient and modern philosophy speaks.

*Ph.* Thus, then, we find ourselves in darkness as thick and in uncertainty as great as if there were no such light.

*Th.* God forbid; we should have neither science nor law, nay, not even reason.

§ 21, 22, etc. *Ph.* I hope that you will at least admit the force of prejudice, which often causes that to pass as natural which has come from the bad instruction to which children have been exposed, and the bad customs which education and association have given them.

*Th.* I admit that the excellent author whom you follow says some very fine things upon that subject, and which have their value if they are taken as they should be; but I do not believe that they are opposed to the doctrine properly understood of nature or of innate truths. And I am confident that he will not extend his remarks too far; for I am equally persuaded that a great many opinions pass for truths which are only the effects of custom and of credulity, and that there are many such opinions, too, which certain philosophers would fain account for as matters of prejudice, which are, however, grounded in right reason and in nature. There is as much or more ground for defending ourselves from those who through ambition oftenest make pretensions to innovation, than for challenging ancient impressions. And after having meditated sufficiently upon ancient and modern thought, I have found that the majority of the received doctrines may bear a good sense. So that I could wish that men of sense would seek to satisfy their ambition by occupying themselves rather in building and advancing than in retrograding and destroying. And I (could) desire that they resemble the Romans who constructed beautiful public works, rather than that Vandal king whom his mother charged to seek the destruction of these grand structures, since he could not hope for the glory of equalling them.

*Ph.* The aim of the clever class who have contended against innate truths has been to prevent men from handing round their prejudices and seeking to cover their idleness beneath this fair name.

*Th.* We are agreed upon this point, for very far from approving that doubtful principles be received, I would, for myself, seek even the demonstration of the axioms of Euclid, as some ancients also have done. And when you ask the means of knowing and examining innate principles, I reply, following what I said above, that with the exception of the instincts whose reason is unknown, you must try to reduce them to first principles, that is to say, to axioms identical or immediate by means of definitions, which are nothing else than a distinct exposition of ideas. I do not doubt even but that your friends who have hitherto been opposed to innate truths, would approve this method, which appears consonant with their principal aim.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *Other Considerations touching Innate Principles, both Speculative and Practical.*

§ 3. *Ph.* You wish to reduce truths to first principles, and I grant you that if there is any such principle, it is without gainsaying this; it is impossible for a thing to be and not to be at the same time. It appears, however, difficult to maintain its innate character, since you must be convinced at the same time that the ideas of impossibility and identity are innate.

*Th.* It is quite necessary that those who favor innate truths maintain and be convinced that these ideas are also innate, and I admit that I am of their opinion. The ideas of being, of possibility, of identity are so completely innate that they enter into all our thoughts and reasonings, and I regard them as essential to our mind; but I have already said that you do not always pay them particular attention and that you discern them only with time. I have said hitherto that we are, so to speak, innate unto ourselves, and since we are beings, the being we is innate; and the knowledge of being is wrapped up in that knowledge which we have of ourselves. There is something similar in the case of other general notions.

§ 4. *Ph.* If the idea of identity is natural, and consequently so evident and so present to the mind that we ought to recognize it from the cradle, I would be pleased to have a child of seven years, and even a man of seventy, tell me whether a man who is a creature consisting of body and soul, is the same (man) when his body is changed, and whether, metempsychosis supposed, Euphorbus would be the same as Pythagoras.

*Th.* I have stated sufficiently that what is natural to us is not known to us as such from the cradle; and even an idea may be known to us without our being able to decide at once all questions which can be formed thereupon. It is as if some one should pretend that a child could not have a knowledge of the square and its diagonal, because he will have difficulty in recognizing that the diagonal is incommensurable with the side of the square. As for the question itself, it appears to me demonstratively solved by the doctrine of Monads, which I have elsewhere shown in its true light, and we shall speak more fully of this matter in the sequel.

§ 6. *Ph.* [I see very well that to you I should object in vain that the axiom which declares that the whole is greater than its part is not innate, under pretext that the ideas of whole and part are relative, dependent upon those of number and extension; since you would apparently maintain that there are ideas conditionally innate, and that those of number and extension are to such a degree innate.<sup>1</sup>]

*Th.* You are right, and indeed I rather believe that the idea of extension is posterior to that of whole and part.

§ 7. *Ph.* [What say you of the truth that God should be worshipped; is it innate?]

*Th.* I believe that the duty of worshipping God declares that on occasion you ought to show that you honor him beyond every other object, and that this is a necessary consequence of the idea of Him and of his existence; which signifies with me that this truth is innate.

§ 8. *Ph.* But the Atheists seem to prove by their example that the idea of God is not innate. And without speaking of those

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<sup>1</sup> French text is: "*puisque vous soutiendrés apparemment, qu'il y a des idées innées respectives, et que celles des nombres et de l'étendue sont innées aussi.*"



whom the ancients have mentioned, have there not been discovered entire nations, who have no idea of God nor of the terms which denote God and the soul, as at the bay of Soldania, in Brazil, in the Caribbee islands, in Paraguay?

*Th.* [The late Mr. Fabricius, a celebrated theologian of Heidelberg, has made an apology for the human race in order to clear it of the imputation of atheism. He was an author of great accuracy, and decidedly above much prejudice; I do not, however, pretend to enter into this discussion of facts. I grant that entire peoples have never thought of the supreme substance, nor of the nature of the soul. And I remember, that when you wished at my request, countenanced by the illustrious Mr. Witsen, to obtain for me in Holland a translation of the Lord's Prayer into the language of Barantola, you were stopped at this point, "hallowed be thy name," because you could not make the Barantoli understand what hallowed means. I remember also that in the creed made for the Hottentots you were obliged to express Holy Spirit by words of the country which signify a pleasant and agreeable wind. This was not unreasonable, for our Greek and Latin words *πνεῦμα*, *anima*, *spiritus*, mean ordinarily only the air or wind we breathe, as one of the most subtile things which we know through the senses; and you begin through the senses to lead men little by little to what is beyond the senses. However, all this difficulty which you find in attaining abstract knowledge effects nothing against innate knowledge. There are people who have no word corresponding to that of being; do you doubt that they do not know what being is, although they think but little of it separately? Besides I find what I have read in our excellent author on the idea of God ("Essay on Understanding," Book I, chapter 3,<sup>1</sup> § 9) so beautiful and so to my liking that I cannot refrain from quoting it.<sup>2</sup> Here it is:

"Men can scarcely avoid having some kind of idea of things of which those with whom they converse often have occasion to speak under certain names, and if the thing is one which carries with it the idea of ex-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 4, in Locke's treatise, Bohn's edition.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> The French translation of Locke's original, is, in my judgment, clearer in form of statement and style than Locke himself. Hence I have retranslated the French into English. If any reader prefers Locke's original, he can easily find it in Bohn's edition of the Philosophical Works, Vol. I, p. 188.—Tr.

cellence, of grandeur, or of some extraordinary quality which interests in some point and which impresses itself upon the mind under the idea of an absolute and irresistible power which none can help fearing" (I add: and under the idea of a superlatively great goodness which none could help loving), "such an idea ought, according to all appearances, to make the strongest impression and to spread farther than any other, especially if it is an idea which accords with the simplest insight of reason, and which flows naturally from every part of our knowledge. Now such is the idea of God, for the brilliant marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the creation that every rational creature who will reflect thereupon cannot fail to discover the author of all these marvels; and the impression that the discovery of such a Being must naturally make upon the soul of all those who have once heard him spoken of is so great and carries with it thoughts of so great weight and so adapted to spread themselves in the world that it appears to me wholly strange that an entire nation of men can be found upon the earth so stupid as to have no idea of God. That, I say, seems to me as surprising as to think of men who should have no idea of numbers or of fire."

I would I might always be allowed to copy word for word a number of other excellent passages of our author, which we are obliged to pass by. I will say only here, that this author, in speaking of the common light of reason, which agrees with the idea of God, and of that which naturally proceeds from it, appears to differ but little from my view of innate truths; and, concerning that which appears to him so strange, *viz.*, that there may be men without any idea of God, that it would be surprising to find men who had no idea of numbers or of fire, I would remark that the inhabitants of the Marian Islands, to which you have given the name of the Queen of Spain, who has protected missions there, had no knowledge of fire when they were discovered, as appears from the narrative which R. P. Gobien, a French Jesuit, charged with the care of distant missions, has given to the public and sent to me.]

§ 16. *Ph.* If you are right in concluding that the idea of God is innate, from the fact that all enlightened races have had this idea, virtue ought also to be innate because enlightened races have always had a true idea of it.

*Th.* [Not virtue, but the idea of virtue, is innate, and perhaps you intend only that.]

*Ph.* It is as certain that there is a God, as it is certain that the opposite angles made by the intersection of two straight lines are equal. And there has never been a rational creature who applied himself sincerely to the examination of the truth of these two propositions who has failed to give them his consent. However, it is beyond doubt that there are many men who, having never turned their thoughts in that direction, are ignorant equally of these two truths.

*Th.* [I admit it; but that does not prevent them from being innate—that is to say, does not prevent you from being able to find them in yourself.]

§ 18. *Ph.* It would be more advantageous to have an innate idea of substance; but it turns out that we do not have it, either innate or acquired, since we have it neither through sensation nor reflection.

*Th.* [I am of opinion that reflection suffices to discover the idea of substance within ourselves, who are substances. And this notion is the most important. But we shall speak of it, perhaps more fully, in the sequel of our conference.]

§ 20 (Gerhardt). *Ph.* If there are innate ideas in the mind without the mind's being actually aware of their presence, they must at least be in the memory, whence they must be drawn by means of reminiscence—that is to say, be known, when memory recalls them, as so many perceptions which have been in the mind before, unless reminiscence can subsist without reminiscence. For this conviction, where it is an inwardly certain one, that a given idea has previously been in our mind, is properly what distinguishes reminiscence from every other kind of thinking.

*Th.* [In order that knowledge, ideas, or truths be in our mind, it is not necessary that we have ever actually thought of them; they are only natural habitudes; *i. e.*, dispositions and aptitudes, active and passive, and more than a *Tubula rasa*. It is true, however, that the Platonists believed that we have already actually thought of that which we recognize in ourselves; and to refute them it is insufficient to say that we do not at all remember, for it is certain that an infinite number of thoughts recur to us which we have forgotten that we had. It has happened that a man believed that he had composed a new verse, which it turned out he

read word for word a long time previous in some ancient poet. And often we have an extraordinary facility of conceiving certain things because we formerly conceived them without remembering them. It may be that a child, having become blind, forgets ever having seen light and colors, as happened at the age of two and a half years from small-pox, in the case of the celebrated Ulric Schoenberg, a native of Weide, in the Upper Palatinate, who died at Königsberg, in Prussia, in 1649, where he taught philosophy and mathematics to the admiration of every one. It may be that such a man has remaining effects of former impressions without remembering them. I believe that dreams often thus revive in us former thoughts. Julius Scaliger, having celebrated in verse the illustrious men of Verona, a certain self-styled Brugnolus, a Bavarian by birth, but afterward established at Verona, appeared to him in a dream and complained that he had been forgotten. Julius Scaliger, not remembering to have heard him spoken of before, did not allow himself to make elegiac verses in his honor in consequence of this dream. At length, the son, Joseph Scaliger, travelling in Italy, learned more particularly that there had been formerly at Verona a celebrated grammarian or learned critic of this name, who had contributed to the re-establishment of polite literature in Italy. This story is found in the poems of Scaliger the father, together with the elegy, and in the letters of the son. It is related also in the Scaligerana, which are culled from the conversations of Joseph Scaliger. It is very likely that Julius Scaliger had known something of Brugnol which he no longer remembered, and that the dream was partly the revival of a former idea, although he may not have had that reminiscence, properly so called, which makes us know that we have already had this same idea; at least, I see no necessity which obliges us to assert that there remains no trace of a perception when there is not enough of it to remind you that you have had it.]

§ 24. *Ph.* [I must admit that your reply is natural enough to the difficulties which we have framed against innate truths. Perhaps, also, our authors do not contest them in the sense in which you maintain them. Thus I return only to say to you, sir] that you have had some reason to fear that the view of innate truths serves as a pretext for laziness, for exempting one's self from the trouble of research, and gives opportunity to

masters and teachers to lay down as a principle of principles that principles must not be questioned.

*Th.* [I have already said that if it is the aim of your friends to advise the search for the proofs of the truths which they can receive, without distinguishing whether or not they are innate, we are entirely agreed; and the view of innate truths, of the manner in which I take them, should deter no one from such search, for, besides being well to seek the reason of the instincts, it is one of my great maxims that it is good to seek demonstrations of the axioms also, and I remember that at Paris, when the late Mr. Roberval, already an old man, was laughed at because he wished to demonstrate those of Euclid after the example of Apollonius and Proclus, I illustrated the utility of this investigation. Nevertheless, whatever the principle of those who say that it is wholly unnecessary to argue against the one who denies principles, it has no authority whatever in regard to these principles which could receive neither doubt nor proof. It is true that, in order to avoid scandal and disturbance, regulations may be made regarding public disputations and some other lectures, in virtue of which the discussion of certain established truths may be prohibited. But this is rather a question of police than of philosophy.]

#### CORRIGENDA.

The following corrections are to be made in the text of the first instalment of this translation, and the accompanying note, published in "The Journal of Speculative Philosophy," vol. xix, No. 3, July, 1885, pp. 275 sq.

*In Prefatory Note:* Page 277, line 24, instead of "district," read "Quarter."

Page 277, line 25, *dele*, "Spiers and Surene's French Dictionary."

Page 278, lines 11, 12, instead of "might give him (Leibnitz) the urgent advice," read "would urgently advise him (Leibnitz)."

Note 1, page 278. W. T. H. suggests that perhaps the reading was *besogne* (work)—instead of *besoin*. So that the passage would read, "researches which required more work (or labor)."

*In text of translation:* Page 280, line 8, instead of "without" read "notwithstanding."

Page 280, line 38, instead of "triumphs" read "will triumph."

Page 281, line 18, instead of "anew," read "as a piece of news."

Page 281, line 20, instead of "elsewhere," read "for the rest."

Page 281, line 32, read "harmony pre-established by the primitive Substance."

Page 281, lines 34, 35, the sense is, and the text should therefore read, "you can say that all things are of one and the same kind, differing only in degrees of perfection."

Page 281, line 38, instead of "at the house of Pliny," read "according to," or "in the writings of Pliny."